In the year 1605, the identity of the people referred to as "Macedonians" in Western and Ragusan historical texts was complex. It differed significantly from both the ancient kingdom of Alexander the Great and the modern political nation-state of North Macedonia.

During the Renaissance and early Ottoman period, European intellectuals and chroniclers like Giacomo Luccari understood "Macedonians" through two primary lenses:

1. The Geographic Meaning (Regional Inhabitants)

In the 17th century, "Macedonia" was not an independent country or an official Ottoman administrative province; it was a broad **geographic region**. [1]

- Anyone living within the historical, geographic boundaries of Macedonia—regardless of whether they spoke a Slavic language, Greek, or Vlach—was frequently referred to as a "Macedonian" by foreign observers.
- This is why Luccari lists them alongside other regional or political groups like "Bosnesi" (Bosnians) and "Slavi" (Slavs). It was a label denoting regional origin rather than a separate, codified modern ethnic identity. [2]

2. Renaissance Classicism (Archaising)

Humanist writers of the 1600s were deeply educated in classical Latin and Greek texts. They heavily practiced **archaising**—the habit of applying ancient, classical names to contemporary populations living in those same areas.

- Authors often used "Macedonians" or "Epirots" to describe the local Christian populations (largely Slavic-speaking or Albanian-speaking populations) resisting the Ottoman Empire.
- A famous parallel example from this era is the military commander Skanderbeg, who was frequently called a "Prince of Epirus" or "Macedonian" in Western literature simply because his domains overlapped with those ancient territories.

The Modern Debate

The reason this text is heavily discussed online today is due to a clash of historical interpretations:

- **The Modern Macedonian Perspective**: Commentators from North Macedonia point to texts like Luccari's as historical proof that "Macedonians" were recognized as a distinct, independent entity entirely separate from Bulgarians, Greeks, and other Slavs as early as 1605. [2]
- **The Greek and Bulgarian Perspectives**: Conversely, regional historians argue that these early modern listings are merely geographic or archaising references. They point out that during the Ottoman era, the Slavic-speaking population of the region was heavily intertwined with the broader Christian Orthodox population and often categorized under different linguistic or religious groups in local records.

If you are interested, we can look into **how Ottoman census records (Defters) classified the**

people of this region during the same century, or explore **maps from the 1600s** to see exactly what territories were defined as Macedonia. Let me know what you would prefer!